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EDITORIAL NOTES

In the April number of the *School Review* attention was called in an editorial article to the report of the Schoolmasters' Association of New York and Vicinity for 1905-6, which association devoted practically the entire year to discussion of the question, "Are College Entrance Requirements Excessive?" At the meeting in October last of the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools the same subject was vigorously debated, and at the close of the meeting a motion was carried providing for the appointment of a committee of twelve—six college and six school representatives—to consider the whole subject and report next fall. A month later the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland appointed a similar committee to consider the same subject. President Seelye, of Smith College, in his annual report, published early in January, expressed positively and strongly the opinion that the entrance requirements of women's colleges were distinctly too high, and ought to be reduced. These are not the only instances that could be brought forward, but they are sufficient to show that the subject is a thoroughly live one, and that it is likely to be a live one for some time to come.

On the other hand, there is at present a strong movement in exactly the opposite direction, though not at all antagonistic, brought about by the influence of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. This institution was at first regarded by the general public as simply an organization for the pensioning of college professors, but those who have come into touch with its work are beginning to realize that it is likely to prove one of the most potent educational forces of the country. When it came to decide what colleges should be admitted to the privileges of its benefactions it set up certain standards to which a college must conform. These included such matters as endowment, equipment, number of professors, and freedom from denominational control; but it also included one qualification that directly touches the schools of the country, namely, that a college to conform to its standard must have entrance requirements amounting to at least fourteen points, a point representing one year's work in a subject at five periods a week.

Thus, according to the standard of the Carnegie Foundation, a college, to be considered a real college, must require as preparation approximately four years of high-school work. This can hardly strike anyone as unreasonably high, and yet it is startling to see how many institutions, even of famous name, fail to come up to this mark. South of Mason and Dixon's line the

colleges that conform to it can be counted on the fingers of one hand. More than one college, in the last year or two, has raised its requirements to a point more nearly normal.

These two tendencies, while exactly opposite, are not in any sense antagonistic, for they are both the result of an attempt to make the college fit more closely on top of the secondary school. Our educational system is far from uniform, but it is steadily becoming less heterogeneous, and the respective fields of the school, the college, and the university are gradually becoming clearly differentiated. We have the college, following a school course of approximately twelve years. Some colleges, particularly in the South, feeling that the schools were deficient, and fearing that if they asked too much for admission the students would pass them by altogether, have deliberately kept their requirements at the standard of forty or fifty years ago; and some colleges, particularly in the East, desiring to have as much of the elementary work as possible done before entrance to college, have pushed their requirements up to a point beyond the power of the schools to meet properly. The two movements at the present time have the same object—to adjust the requirements of the colleges to the work that the schools can do—on the one hand to raise the standard as far as is reasonable, and on the other to reduce it to a normal point.

The question naturally suggests itself, is such uniformity desirable? Is it not for the best interests of education to have diversity of standards? There is, of course, something to be said for this point of view, but it can hardly be denied that the normal standard of admission to college must be the work that can be done in the ordinary school course. Variations from that norm almost always produce unsatisfactory results. Requiring less than can be accomplished in the full school course allows more freedom, but if the difference is considerable it creates a tendency for the student to hurry his work and to enter college a year sooner than he should. Requiring more than can properly be performed makes it necessary for some of the work to be slighted, and thus lowers the standard of quality. It would be a logical course for a college to say frankly that it would admit students after three years of high-school work, or that it required a year of study after graduation from school, but the asking of an additional subject, or of a little more of some subject, it is difficult to justify on any good ground.

It is clear, then, that the whole question of the quantity of admission requirements for college is up for discussion and is likely to be thoroughly threshed out in the next few years. There will probably be no serious disputing of the position that the American college must rest squarely on top of the American school. That being the case, the question of how much the college may legitimately demand must be answered by ascertaining how much the school is able to supply. It is not so much a question of what the college would like, as of what the school can do. Have we not reached the point where that question can be taken up, discussed thoroughly and

exhaustively, and answered authoritatively? Are we not ready for the establishment of a representative commission of schoolmasters to investigate the whole subject and to report conclusions which will afford a definite basis both for discussion and for action? And is there any body that could father this movement better than the Carnegie Foundation? It has undertaken to establish a minimum standard of admission to college, and in so doing it has exerted a far-reaching influence. It would not only place its own action beyond the reach of criticism, but it would render a profound service to both higher and secondary education if it were to determine in an authoritative manner the amount of work that our schools can adequately do, and, therefore, that our colleges may reasonably demand.

W. F.